

[167 cont.]

684
586 The adulterous wife usually is repudiated and her parents must inform the dowry. The husband has the right to kill his wife and even her accomplice. This right is almost never exercised.

548
778 N. B. — We have said above (paragraph relative to the general character of the "Méo" that many "Méo" young women were of rather easy virtue and even examples of prostitution are cited without the slightest dishonor to those engaged in it. All Europeans who have passed through Dongvan or have lived there for a while, are familiar with the famous "sacred wood" located within a few hundred meters of the post (it may be seen in the background of photo 467, Plate 41). This wood, of small extent, is situated between two hills. There are very fine trees, several groups of rather picturesque rocks, and it encloses the ruins of an ancient pagoda.

548 When a European goes for a walk in this wood, one may soon see descending from the neighboring hillsides where they are working, several young "Méo" women coming to offer the stroller their smiles and ... all the rest. It is only just to add, however, that the nymphs of the "sacred wood" of Dongvan do not always belong to the "Méo" group and that they also include young "Lolo" women (of the kind photo 465, Plate 30 shows).

764
[769] The respect and worship of the dead are not as rigorously observed among the "Méo" as in the other groups. The funerals, like the other great events of life — births and marriages — are scarcely more than occasions for drinking and feasting.

[825] The corpse, dressed in his best clothes, is fastened standing upright against one of the walls of the hall of honor, where relatives, neighbors, and friends are gathered together. For three days the feasts and the dances alternate without interruption. The deceased is invited to share in the meals and often small pieces of meat are placed in his mouth. In certain tribes, a dog is killed, which then is fastened to the hand of the deceased by means of a paper ribbon. This dog is charged with guiding the steps of his master on the pathways of the other life.

The site of the grave designated by the priest-sorcerer, the corpse is carried on a stretcher to the place of burial. When a coffin is built, the placing of the body in the bier is done at the last moment, at [188] the edge of the trench, as soon as it is dug. The cortège,

855 hard toil of the fields. Too thinly clad and fed almost exclusively
857 on maize, they remain exposed to the inclemencies of the seasons,
all-day long, and spend the night in a house open to every wind.
This produces selection proceeding from the disappearance of the
weak, but those who resist such a regimen are then able to withstand
any sort of hardship.

/Between pages 136 and 137 of the text, the two following photographs
appear: "White Meo women"; "Embroidered Meo women."--trans-
lator/

591 /137/ When young men of the family marry, if there are
sufficient fields to cultivate around the family house, they bring their
wife there and live under the authority of the father of the family.
If this is not the case, they go and establish themselves in the midst
of an area needing to be cleared, and undertake the task courageously.

548 The chastity of Meo women does not seem to be as unassail-
836 able as that of Tho women, and some of them shamelessly engage
in prostitution, and do not have to leave their place in the family on
this account. When on an inspection tour in Dongvan, I remember
that I expressed my astonishment at hearing hands clap each time I
passed through certain woods, which surrounded a pagoda near the
post. But my astonishment gave place to stupefaction when I learned
that the sacred wood was permanently haunted by young Meo girls
who accorded their favors to all who came beneath its discreet shade.

[624]
[361] The number of houses which make up a hamlet rarely exceeds
631 three or four. Even then the inhabitants usually are of the same stock,
615 and the head of the hamlet is naturally enough the progenitor of the
family group. The various hamlets of a small valley or of a little
rocky cirque are grouped under the authority of a ma phai, who is
properly speaking the chief of the village. Several villages are grouped
under the authority of a ping tau, who fills the role of a giap truông
or district chief in an Annamese commune, and who is himself
assisted in his duties by a tsa thao. Finally, the different districts
are joined together to form a tribe under the orders of a tung cha
who fills the role of the mayor of a Tho commune, with a still greater
631 authority. This is the type of organization which exists in Dong Quan
609 and surrounding country, when the tribe is of a certain extent. If
563 it is less important, it is headed only by a ping tau or a simple ma
phaï, who is under the authority of the mayor of the Tho commune

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/88 cont./

M seriously disturbed. It is gayest when Bun Ma, our Lao
832 interpreter, is visited in his camp by three or four girls together.
883 Then there is no end of ringing laughter; it wakes us up in the
123 morning and prevents us from falling asleep at night. They
tease him about one of the girls, urge him to visit her because,
they say, she is waiting for him, ask how the Lao make love,
and so forth. Bun Ma, a slender, gracefully built Lao, feels
himself very much the center of attention and declares that
if they were not so dirty he would long since have made friends
M with a Meau girl. As a matter of fact, the dirtiness of the
[515] girls considerably disturbs the Lao, very much accustomed to
cleanliness, though he is readily captivated by the pretty faces
and the ingratiating nature of the girls. In the evening Bun Ma
M sits in the house of the chief, and the girls teach him the love
[533] songs of the Meau in their language, and even the old chief
joins in and, turning toward Bun Ma with a smirk, sings in the
same register as the girls and amid general laughter: "Where
do you stay so long. I am waiting for you!"

A That purely materialistic considerations play only a
M minor role in the choice of a partner is shown by the fact that
836 prostitution is unknown among both peoples and a girl never
yields to a man who is not congenial to her. To be sure, it is
[548] customary for every young man to give his beloved a silver
[431] necklace, if he can afford it, while the girl in return gives him
a beautiful batik cloth which she has made herself (see the
chapter, "Clothing and Ornaments"); these gifts are /Ills. 22-
25 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /89/ exchanged as a
matter-of-course and incidentally after the pleasures of love
have been enjoyed, and no girl is going to deny herself to a
young man who is unable to give her an ornament, if she likes
him otherwise. A girl is never influenced in the choice of her
partner by the prospect of receiving an ornament afterward.

In contrast to my observations, Abadie (1) writes

1. Page 167.

concerning the Meau: "Even cases of prostitution are reported,
without its casting the slightest dishonor upon those concerned..."

/89 cont. /

114 A more detailed description, however, shows that this is without
doubt a case of degeneracy about such as the proximity of any
major station may bring about. The author speaks of a "sacred
grove" in the neighborhood of Dongvan and continues: "If a
European goes for a walk in this grove, one immediately sees
several Meau girls descend from the neighboring hills where
they work and offer the stroller their smiles and ... the rest..."

836 The unmarried, mature boys and girls of the Meau meet
at suitable places along the edge of the fields or preferably at
night in the field huts, but never in a dwelling. Dhuraratsadorn (2)

2. Page 168.

[776] even maintains in his work that lovers are forbidden to meet in
[688] any dwelling for a tryst, because this would offend the house
spirits. If anyone were to violate this command, he would be
fined by the village elders, and the fine would be handed over
to the owner of the house. Thus if two young people wanted to
meet, they would have to agree on a place somewhere in the
jungle.

[343] The Chinese sources speak of special "love huts" of the
young people, which girls, beginning at the age of ten, are
allowed to visit (3).

3. Eberhard. II. p. 154.

[533] Singing and the jew's-harp (see the chapter, "Art," the
section on "Music and Musical Instruments") play an important
role at these meetings. The lovers hold hands and take turns
singing to each other or playing the jew's-harp for hours.

833 Gradually the music-makers proceed to the sexual overtures,
which are sometimes prolonged for hours. The partners
stroke chest, body, and back, touch and stroke the organs,
intertwine their legs, nuzzle each other, bite /90/ each other

[832] hard, and the like. The European kiss, on the other hand, is
unknown, as among most primitive peoples, as is touching the
mouth of the partner with one's own mouth, as well as erotic

Miao AE5

/113 cont. /

586 the rich and the poor. If the woman is young and pretty, it is
648 usually simple for the trader to persuade another rich Meau in a
[587] far-distant village to take the woman and to repay the bride
[583] price to the first husband. Otherwise, the trader sells the
[548] woman as a prostitute to one of the Chinese brothels.

In principle, the deceived husband has the right to kill
586 the adulteress and her seducer; in practice, this is hardly ever
837 done. Both Abadie (1) and Lanjonquière (2) write in the same
[114]

1. Page 167.

2. II.

words that generally the affair is settled through repudiation of
[184] the wife and repayment of the bride price. Dhuraratsadorn (3).

3. Page 169.

however, reports that among the Meau in Thailand, if a wife
commits adultery, her husband can get a divorce only with her
consent. If she refuses, the marriage has to be continued. He
says that the wife has no divorce-right at all because she --
since she is not permitted to return to her parents' house --
would have to support herself. This could be done, however,
only under the greatest difficulties.

[114] /114/ These statements sound improbable, and I did not
[184] find them confirmed among the Meau in Thailand. It is
possible, however, in case of a seduction of a wife, that the
deceived husband asks his village chief to convene the popular
assembly. In exceptional cases, the seducer may then be
condemned to pay the entire bride price to the husband, while
the wife must nevertheless remain with her husband as before.

586 Bad treatment is no more grounds for divorce than wife's
laziness or a husband's inability to support his wife or childless-
ness. In all these cases, too, the bride price is not repaid.